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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/(
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8038
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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: CASC, OREP (RYAN, LEO) GY
SUBJ: DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ARRIVING IN GEORGETOWN WITHOUT VISAS.
REF: A. GEORGETOWN 3729 B. GEORGETOWN 3714.

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE SEVERAL AMERICAN JOURNALISTS WHO ARRIVED IN GEORGETOWN IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF NOV. 15 ON PA 227 (THE SAME PLANE THAT BROUGHT CODEL RYAN) HAVE EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES WITH GUYANESE IMMIGRATION. THE PROBLEM TURNS AROUND THE POINT THAT THESE JOURNALISTS HAD NOT OBTAINED VISAS FROM THE GUYANESE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON BEFORE DEPARTING FOR GEORGETOWN. IN MANY CASES -- BUT NOT ALL - THE PAPERWORK TO OBTAIN VISAS HAD BEGUN BUT HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED. NEVERTHELESS, IT APPEARS THAT THE JOURNALISTS DECIDED TO TRAVEL TO GEORGETOWN, APPARENTLY HOPING THAT THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ON THE SAME PLANE WITH CODEL RYAN WOULD ENABLE THEM TO OBTAIN ENTRY EVEN THOUGH VISAS HAD NOT BEEN OBTAINED.

2. SINCE BECOMING AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL OF THE AIRCRAFT, EMB HAS GONE TO EXTRAORDINRRQ LENGTHS TO ARRANGE FOR ENTRY OF THESE JOURNALISTS. THIS HAS INCLUDED CALLS TO THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION AT THE AIRPORT AND OTHER OFFICIALS

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BETWEEN 2:00 AND 4:00 A.M. NOVEMBER 15. SINCE 8:00 A.M. THE AMBASSADOR HAS SPOKEN TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER PERSONALLY ON THE MATTER. THE PAO HAS ALSO BEEN IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS IN AN EFFORT TO ARRANGE FOR THE ENTRY OF THESE VISA-LESS JOURNALISTS. AS OF ONE O'CLOCK P.M. NOV. 15 (WASHINGTON TIME), ALL OF THE JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN ADMITTED TO GUYANA AND THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS ASSURES US THAT EACH WILL RECEIVE A VISA FOR FIVE DAYS (DURATION OF THE CODEL VISIT). THE GUYANESE CHIEF OF INFORMATION OFFICER WILL MEET WITH THE JOURNALISTS AT 2 P.M. WASHINGTON TIME.

3. BY CONTRAST WITH THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY THE PRESSMAN WHO CHOSE TO TRAVEL WITHOUT GOG VISAS, THE NBC CAMERA TEAM FROM SAN FRANCISCO, WHICH HAD OBTAINED VISAS WELL IN ADVANCE, HAS APPARENTLY HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN ENTERING THE COUNTRY. THE ONLY INCONVENIENCE THEY

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SUFFERED WAS THE REQUIREMENT THAT THEY RETURN TO THE AIRPORT DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ARRANGE FOR THE DUTY FREE ENTRY OF THEIR EQUIPMENT THROUGH GUYANESE CUSTOMS. THIS TOO HAS NOW BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

4. THE EMBASSY COULD HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE HELPFUL IN THIS MATTER IF WE HAD BEEN INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF THE NAMES AND AFFILIATIONS OF THE JOURNALISTS WHO ARRIVED HERE THIS MORNING.

BURKE

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